



# and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN

WNU RELEASE



THE STORY THUS FAR: Alicia starts a rumor that there "is something mighty peculiar" about Mrs. Fallon's sickness. It is discussed in the neighborhood and Megan hears it. She learns that a "Miss Martha," a sister of Mrs. Fallon, lives with the principal and his wife. Megan felt sorry for Tom Fallon, and she thought a great deal about the gossip about him and his wife when she started to her favorite resting place on the top of a low hill beyond the meadow. Tom Fallon was sitting on the rock she used as a bench when she arrived. When she inquired about his wife's health, he replied: "She is mentally ill." When Meg went to a quilting party at Mrs. Stuart's, Alicia pricks her about Tom.

### CHAPTER III

"I dunno as any of us think the 'essor's exactly hidin'," she said curtly. "An' I dunno's any of us think Pleasant Grove is such a hick place, come to think of it. Some folks seem to like it. If they didn't I reckon they could go somewhere's else."

Alicia colored darkly and shrugged. "I'm sorry I even mentioned the fact that I saw you," she said ungraciously. "But after all, the Ridge is public property. It's not posted or anything. I had as much right to be there as you and Mr. Fallon! I was merely gathering a few Autumn leaves and some bitersweet berries to put in the blue pottery bowl in my front window."

Megan was trembling a little, though she knew she was being silly. The little scene with Tom Fallon had been so absurdly innocent; yet there was something in the sly, furtive manner of Alicia's mentioning it that had made it seem evil and scheming.

Megan, still furious with Alicia and her nasty tongue, got away from the quilting party as early as she decently could. At least Mrs. Stuart understood, when, at the door she drew Megan aside and said forthrightly, "Now look here, Megan, don't pay no attention to that woman. Someone ought to take a gun to her and blow her to Kingdom Come, and that's a fact!"

Halfway down the road, she heard a cheerful voice and turned as a pretty girl of seventeen, her arms laden with schoolbooks, came running towards her.

"Hi, Meggie," said the girl, flushed and smiling, and very pretty in a childish, round-faced, bright-eyed way.

"Hello, Susie—you're late getting home from school!" said Megan lightly.

"Had to stay after school and write a composition. Like a fool, I thought I could get away with not doing one—according to the law of averages, I shouldn't have been called on today, but the darned law let me down. Miss Pound's a holy terror—seems to look at you and know without asking a question whether you've done your homework," answered Susie bitterly.

They walked together in companionable silence down the wide, unpaved road, until suddenly Susie said bitterly, "I hear the Alicia dame dug her little stiletto into you and Professor Fallon today! That makes you a member, in good standing, of my own club."

Megan caught her breath and stopped still.

"How on earth did you hear—" she began in amazement.

Susie's little chuckle was dry and quite without mirth.

"Oh it's all over the place," she said. "By supper time, there won't be a man, woman or child within a mile of the place that won't know you've been meeting the professor secretly in the woods—"

"Susie," Megan wailed. "That's not true—"

"Of course not—but d'you think for a minute that's going to stop the story? Don't be a twerp, Meggie—you know it won't!" said Susie. "It wasn't true that I was sneaking off to meet Bill Esmond either—but you'd have a hard time convincing anybody in this town that it isn't! Just because one afternoon I happened to run into him at the county seat and had a soda with him. My mother hit the roof, on account of because Bill's folks are not—well, not quite as high hat as most other thinks we ought to be—"

Her young voice trembled a little and she blinked hard to clear her eyes of threatened tears.

Megan asked curiously, "Is that all there is to that story, Susie?"

Susie flushed and her eyes were stormy.

"Absolutely! Up to then," she added. "Oh, sure, I liked Bill—we all did! He was an honor student, and the kids were crazy about him and he played football like nobody's business—but I'd never had a date with him in my life. How could I, when dad and mother practically lock me up nights? But that afternoon, mother was sick with a headache, and she wanted some stuff from the county seat that Burns didn't have, and I took the car and drove over. And I ran into Bill. He'd just had his physical and was all but ready to be taken into the Cadet Air Corps, and we celebrated by having a soda."

Susie drew a deep breath and said quietly, "Bill's—quite a fellow!" She laughed and said, "Maybe I ought to be grateful to the Stevenson wench—if she hadn't

raised such a row about my having a soda with him, and behaving as though she'd seen me coming out of some foul dive with him—I'd never have noticed what a grand guy he is! Oh, well—"

They walked on in silence and at the gate to the MacTavish place, they stopped and Susie said suddenly, "Meggie, is there any truth in what Stevenson says about—Mary Rogers?"

"Mary Rogers?" Megan repeated puzzled.

"You know she got expelled last month and she's gone to stay with her sister and learn to be a war worker—a riveter or something—"

Susie explained, and after a moment blurted out, "The Stevenson—er—witch—says Mary is going to have a baby, and has dropped a hint that Bill may have some part in the matter—"

Megan said explosively, disgust in her voice, "Goodness, Susie—what a foul story!"

Susie nodded wretchedly.

She said good night and went on along the road. A quarter of a mile farther on, she would come to the substantial, old-fashioned red brick house that was Pleasant Grove's finest home. Susie was the only child of Lawyer Bartlett and his wife, Maysie. The Bartletts were, next to the Burns, Pleasant Grove's most substantial citizens, and Mrs. Bartlett was not one to let the town forget that for a moment. There were times when Megan felt extremely sorry for Susie—and tonight was one of those times. She sighed a little and went into the house, where Annie had supper almost ready to serve.

Her father was waiting for her, very comfortable in his smoking jacket and slippers, provided with a new book (which had cost three dollars and a half, and which Megan could have borrowed for him from the small, but good local library) so he was inclined to be genial. For which small favor, Megan told herself wearily, she was glad!

For the next two or three days, although she told herself she was being a fool, Megan deliberately avoided seeing Tom Fallon at all. He had been in the habit of stopping on his way home from school late in the afternoon to get milk, butter, and eggs which he bought from her. She had always been the one to give them to him, but for the next two or three days, she saw to it that she was somewhere else when he stopped by, and Annie, puzzled and watchful, waited on him.

But on Saturday, she was in the chicken yard checking up on a setting hen who was due to hatch her brood in a few days, when Tom came to the back fence and spoke to her.

"Good morning," he said, almost warily.

Megan turned, startled, and felt her face grow hot, even as she greeted him casually and matter-of-factly.

He waited for her to come to the fence before he said anxiously, "I've been a little worried—and deeply puzzled. I've tried my darnedest to think what I could have done to upset you—"

Megan laughed and hated herself because the laugh sounded artificial. "What nonsense, Professor!"

"But you have avoided me, and I thought possibly something I said or did—" he began anxiously.

Megan looked up at him and said quietly and frankly, "I see you haven't heard the news, Mr. Fallon!"

Puzzled, noting her use of the formal prefix rather than the careless friendly "Professor" that was almost a nickname, he said quickly, "News? No, I am afraid I haven't—"

"I feel very silly to be relaying it to you—but I know Pleasant Grove so well—the attitude toward teachers, especially towards the principal of the school—" She floundered miserably and was silent.

Tom said quietly, "I think you had better tell me straight, Miss MacTavish—"

"There seems to be a rumor about that you and I have been meeting secretly on the Ridge—" She let him have it almost in a single breath.

Tom stared at her as though he thought she had lost her mind. And then his face hardened and his eyes blazed and he said through his teeth, "Where in blazes—who'd try to start a lie like that?"

Megan made a weary little gesture.

"It's too silly—and too—cheap to notice," she pointed out to him. "Except that since you are new here and this is your first year—oh, I feel an utter fool about the whole thing. But I thought it would be better if we—well, we've done nothing to start gossip, so it seems a little difficult to know how to stop it—"

Tom said sternly, "Who started this talk?"

"Mrs. Stevenson," answered Megan frankly. "She happened to be on the Ridge the afternoon we met by accident, and chose to believe that we were meeting there regularly—and as secretly as possible—"

"But that's nonsense—she could not possibly believe anything so—so—darned silly!" Tom exploded.

"I don't think she really believes it, but she seems to get quite a lot of pleasure out of dropping little significant remarks."

Puzzled, Tom said, "Who is this Mrs. Stevenson? I suppose she has a child in school, but I don't seem to recall the name, though it's not unusual, of course."

dark gray of weathered drabness. But since Alicia had come, she had painted the window trim and the corners of the house a rich deep green; there were green window boxes at the windows, and the place had taken on a rather surprised perkiness.

"Oh, well—" said Susie at last, and heaving a sigh. "If I don't get on home, mother will have conniptions fits and upset dad so that his dyspepsia will be worse than ever—and I would like to go to the school dance the Saturday after Thanksgiving."

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Veterans' SERVICE BUREAU

EDITOR'S NOTE: This newspaper, through special arrangement with the Washington Bureau of Western Newspaper Union at 1616 Eye Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., is able to bring readers this weekly column on problems of the veteran and serviceman and his family. Questions may be addressed to the above Bureau and they will be answered in a subsequent column. No replies can be made direct by mail, but only in the column which will appear in this newspaper regularly.

### Correspondence Courses

Veterans administration has negotiated contracts with 38 educational institutions throughout the country authorizing them to furnish correspondence and extension courses by mail to veterans eligible for educational benefits under veterans legislation.

Courses offered cover virtually every educational field from academic subjects to a wide variety of trades and professions. Approximately 500,000 veterans already are enrolled under the government program in schools and colleges, or taking on-the-job training and further thousands already employed are asking opportunity to further their education by mail.

The veteran receives no subsistence while pursuing a correspondence course and the total cost of all such courses may not exceed \$500. Of the 38 contracts thus far signed, 25 are with colleges and universities in 19 states. Fifteen of these offer high school as well as college courses. The balance of 13 are trade and business schools offering courses in such subjects as refrigeration, radio electronics, engineering, television, journalism, federal income tax, machine drafting, hotel training, traffic management, accounting and filing.

Application for these correspondence courses should be made at your nearest Veterans Administration regional office.

### Questions and Answers

Q. My daughter's husband was honorably discharged in December, 1945, after two years and three months overseas. She never received an allotment. In 1942 she wrote in and asked why. She received an answer saying her husband never signed an allotment to her. But they sent papers to sign and she sent these in with her marriage certificate. We never heard from them again and they never returned the marriage certificate. Now she is divorced, but it is not a year yet. Is she still eligible for this allotment?—Mrs. W. W., Mt. Angel, Ore.

A. I believe she is eligible, but write to Army Central Adjustment Office, 4300 Goodfellow Blvd., St. Louis 20, Mo., and give all details.

Q. How would I get a business loan through? I would love to have a grocery store. I went to general headquarters, but they don't tell me anything. They don't care whether a veteran gets anything or not. Give me all the information possible.—World War II veteran, A. O., Ropesville, Texas.

A. First, find a bank or other lender who is making G.I. loans. Tell him your story, your background, how much money you have, if any, and what you want to use the loan for. If he thinks you are a good risk, he will send in the papers for your eligibility certificate and make the loan. Your local chamber of commerce, local Red Cross, or county agent can help you find a lender making these loans and give you all details.

Q. My husband deserted me and my two children. He went to the navy, but also deserted there for 7 months and 21 days. When they got him back in the service they gave him 3 years in prison. We drew an allotment while he was in service, but it stopped when he was out. Now he is overseas and we have a divorce. Should the children be drawing from him? The navy was to notify me if he went back to duty, but haven't. What shall I do?—Mrs. A. M. W., Bluff, N. C.

A. The navy suggests that you write to Field Services, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Cleveland, Ohio, and explain your situation, giving all details possible.

Q. My husband is with the 6th Marines in China. He has more points that are required for a discharge, but he is a regular. He has been overseas 16 months. How long will he have to remain overseas? He has been in the service for over 10 years.—Mrs. J. D. P., Lincoln, Neb.

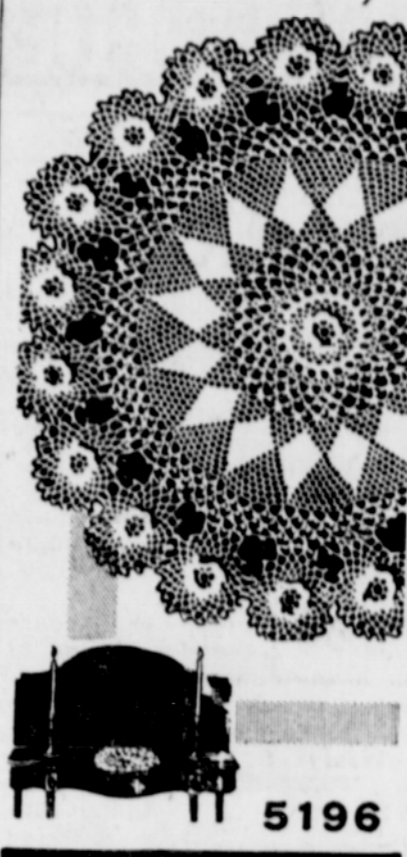
A. Ordinarily a tour of overseas duty in the marines for a regular is 24 months unless his enlistment is up prior to that time.

Q. Will a serviceman returned from Manila so ill with malaria it appeared he would die and now improved be able to work after filing for a pension? He filed for the pension while in the hospital, but believes now he could farm a little, could he draw money like other soldiers do?—Mrs. D. S., Luther, Tenn.

A. A disability pension will not interfere with his drawing adjusted compensation for self-employment if he is eligible for such compensation and able to work. Apply to your nearest state unemployment compensation office.

## NEEDLEWORK PATTERNS

### Crochet Lovely Heirloom Doily



white linen oblong place mats edged in a plain "picot" to complement the centerpiece.

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709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.  
Enclose 20 cents for pattern.  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### How Sweet Is the Age of Innocence

The young wife had just gleaned a delightful bit of information. "Oh, by the way, Mother," she remarked, with exaggerated nonchalance, "Henry's going in for anthropology. You know, I always said he had brains!"

"Humph! Anthropology!" sniffed the parent. "That good-for-nothing couldn't even pronounce the word! What gave you that crazy notion?"

"Well," continued the young wife complacently, "I found some green tickets in his pocket, marked 'Mudhorse 15 to 1'! When I asked him about them he said they were relics of a lost race."

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If your tractor, truck and car have no filters, your dealer will install Fram Filcron filters to help save motor trouble, breakdowns and costly repairs. If your equipment is already filter-equipped, have him make the Fram Dipstick Test. The Dipstick tells the story! If oil is dirty, he'll put in Genuine Fram Replacement Cartridges to get the most out of your present filters. There's a Fram cartridge to fit most every type of filter, so see your dealer today! FRAM CORPORATION, Providence 16, R. I.

\*Contains heavy-duty oils, due to the detergent additive used, will turn dark in color almost as soon as put into the engine. Where such oils are used, filter cartridges must be changed on a mileage or hourly basis.

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